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SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON REVISED CIV-MIL CELL FOR
REGIONAL COMMAND - SOUTH

REF: STATE 99182

Classified By: Deputy Political Chief John Crowley. Reasons: 1.4(b)(d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) Australia is broadly supportive of the revised Civil-Military Planning and Coordination Cell concept but will not be ready to deploy staff by the November 1 target. In other comments on the revised concept paper, the GOA acknowledged the requirement for flexibility in the role and responsibilities of the civ-mil cell, but stressed the need for clear objectives and functions in order to secure Regional Command - South (RC(S)) partner support. Australia also flagged the need to put in place appropriate living and working infrastructure before deploying civilians to staff the cell. Regarding the senior-level steering group, the GOA urged that the RC(S) Commander be fully engaged in the steering group process as a means of establishing the requisite authority to set regional priorities based on the steering group's advice. Moreover, maximum involvement of UNAMA and GIROA representation on the steering committee would be important in the eventual civilianization of reconstruction efforts. End summary.

2. (C) On October 1, John Merrill, Director for Afghanistan, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, passed a paper to poloff that summarized in outline form the conclusions of an interagency GOA review of the revised civ-mil planning and coordination cell concept (reftel). Text of the paper, entitled "Civ-Mil Planning and Coordination Cell at Regional Command (South) Headquarters - Australian Views," follows:

Begin text:

-- Welcome the opportunity to comment on this latest draft and support of the proposal:

- in particular emphasis on improving civilian input into military activities in RC(S) through integration of a civilian cell within the RC(S) Headquarters to coordinate provincial and regional goals.

-- Australia acknowledges the need for flexibility in developing the role and precise responsibilities of the civ-mil cell, but also recognizes the need for clear

understanding of the cell objectives and functions to secure RC(S) partner support and assist implementation:

- we support the development of basic terms of reference, and further delineation of roles and responsibilities, particularly in relations to PTFs and PRTs;

- we support the proposed integration of the cell within RC(S) HQ structure - we believe the cell should be working directly to Commander RC(S)

-- We understand U.S. rationale on the need to move quickly and for partners to be creative in identifying and deploying civilians, however, also support need to get appropriate structures in place first:

- Australia will positively consider contribution to the civ-mil cell but will not (be) in position to deploy staff under the desired timeframe
Under the desired timeframe

- emphasize that practical living and working infrastructure issues will need to be addressed to assist implementation.

-- Welcome the proposed dual approach of improved working-level coordination, as well as a senior-level steering group:

- the steering group will be useful method to provide direction and, where necessary, allocate resources to ensure provincial and regional efforts are achieved and accord with national-level guidance. Commander RC(S) should be fully engaged in the steering group process. This will provide the requisite authority to set regional priorities on the basis of the steering group's advice.

- the form of the UNAMA and GIROA representation on the steering committee will be important and should maximize their involvement -- a core element in eventual civilianization of reconstruction efforts.

End text.

MCCALLUM